

CITY OF EVANSVILLE - 2026

SONDRA MATTHEWS



*Founder of Our Times Newspaper, Founder of
the Evansville African American Museum,
Community Leader*

Sondra Matthews is widely recognized as a living legend for her lifelong commitment to community service, activism, and the preservation of Black history. A graduate of Lincoln High School, she earned a degree in Mass Communications from the University of Evansville in 1977 and has long served as a voice for the underserved.

In 1983, Matthews and her nephew, DeMarco Hampton, founded *Our Times*, Evansville's only Black-owned newspaper, ensuring that Black voices, stories, and issues were recorded and preserved. In response to plans to demolish the Lincoln Gardens housing complex, she advanced a vision to preserve the history of Baptisstown, leading to the creation of the Evansville African American Museum. One building was saved for just \$1, nonprofit status was achieved in 1999, and the museum opened in 2007.

Her service spans voter engagement, historic preservation, education, and direct community support. She has been honored as a Sagamore of the Wabash, and South Garvin Avenue has been renamed Sondra L. Matthews Way. Her legacy reminds future generations of the power of storytelling, advocacy, and owning one's narrative.